

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAKAR 03992 090952Z
ACTION AF-10

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CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 USIA-15 /070 W
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P R 090825Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9793
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

UNCLAS DAKAR 3992

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PLO, SG
SUBJECT: YASSER ARAFAT MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO SENEGAL

1. PRESIDENT OF PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE YASSER ARAFAT ARRIVED IN DAKAR JUNE 6 AT BEGINNING OF TWO-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT. ARRIVAL, COMPLETE WITH WELCOME BY PRIME MINISTER ABODOU DIOUF, MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND MILITARY HONOR GUARD, WAS FRONT-PAGED IN JUNE 7 GOVERNMENT-OWNED SOLEIL IN STANDARD FORM USED FOR VISITS BY HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, AND WIDELY COVERED BY RADIO AND TV. ARAFAT MOVED AROUND DAKAR WITH FULL MOTORCYCLE ESCORT.

2. SOLEIL'S POLITICAL COMMENTATOR MOCTAR KEBE QUOTES ARAFAT ARRIVAL STATEMENT, EMPHASIZING DECLARATION THAT "WE (PALESTINIANS) KNOW YOUR COUNTRY THROUGH THE GREAT QUALITIES OF PRESIDENT SENGHOR, WHO SERVES OUR CAUSE VERY EVENHANDEDLY." KEBE CITES FRUSTRATIONS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND EXTOLS JUSTICE OF THEIR NATIONAL CAUSE.

3. DURING OFFICIAL DINNER HE GAVE FOR ARAFAT EVENING JUNE 6, SENGHOR'S TOAST, WHILE NOTING SUFFERING OF PALESTINIAN
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PEOPLE, AND RECOGNIZING NEED FOR CREATION OF AN ARAB STATE OF PALESTINE, LAID MOST HEAVY EMPHASIS ON BROADER TOPICS OF AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION AND THIRD WORLD SOLIDARITY. TOAST NOTED IN PASSING SENEGAL'S RESPECT FOR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL DIGNITY, BUT DENOUNCED "OPPRESSION OF OTHER PEOPLES, AND THE DEPRIVATION OF NATIONAL RIGHTS."

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH VISIT CAN BE VIEWED IN LONG-TERM CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S EFFORTS AT MEDIATION AND PEACEMAKING IN MIDDLE EAST, CONSIDERABLE FANFARE BEING GIVEN ARAFAT HERE ALSO SERVES TO REITERATE TO NEWLY-ELECTED ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SENEGAL'S SUPPORT FOR PLO'S POSITION REGARDING NECESSITY FOR CREATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE. ARAB DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS, INCLUDING LEBANESE AMBASSADOR DO NOT SEE ARAFAT VISIT AS HAVING SPECIFIC PLO OBJECTIVE BEYOND WIDER SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATION IN AFRICA. THEY POINT OUT SENGHOR ISSUED INVITATION TO ARAFAT AT AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT IN CAIRO. LEBANESE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT FACT ARAB AMBASSADORS WERE NOT INVITED BY SENECALESE TO GREET ARAFAT AT AIRPORT NOR TO DINNER AT PALACE WHICH WAS STRICTLY PLO-SENECALESE AFFAIR. SENECALE'S AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT, MOUSTAPHA CISSE, RETURNED TO DAKAR FOR THE VISIT AND SERVED AS ARAB INTERPRETER THROUGHOUT. SECURITY WAS TIGHT AROUND PRESIDENTIAL PALACE.

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